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ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION

Letter dated 26 October 1995 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 25 October 1995, addressed to you by H.E. Mr. Osman Ertuğ, representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 103 and 104, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hüseyin E. ÇELEM
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 25 October 1995 from Mr. Osman Ertuğ to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the statement made by the Greek Cypriot delegate at the meeting of the Third Committee held on 12 October 1995, under agenda items 103 and 104 (see A/C.3/50/SR.8). This statement contains a flurry of allegations which are totally unfounded and at variance with the realities of Cyprus. In view of the absence of any Turkish Cypriot delegate at the said meeting, owing to the usurpation and continued monopolization of the title of "the Government of Cyprus" by the Greek Cypriot side since 1963, I am compelled to respond to these allegations in writing, which is the only means available to me, in order to set the record straight.

Those who are familiar with the events of the recent past in Cyprus know perfectly well that the Greek Cypriots should be the last people to accuse anyone of human rights violations. In the genocidal attacks launched against the Turkish Cypriots during the 1963-1974 period, the Greek Cypriots not only drove one quarter of the Turkish Cypriot population out of their homes and properties in 103 villages, but also engaged in brutal mass killings in many areas throughout Cyprus, in a severe campaign of "ethnic cleansing". During this period, even the most basic rights and fundamental freedoms of the Turkish Cypriots were violated by the Greek Cypriot administration, which had imposed severe restrictions on the Turkish Cypriot enclaves and curtailed all efforts to revive the Turkish Cypriot economy through a war of attrition. The savagery and ferocious nature of these attacks, which continued intermittently until 1974, have been well recorded in periodic reports issued by the United Nations as well as in foreign press reports of the period, and hardly need to be repeated here. It would suffice to quote the following as a typical example:

> "... the economic restrictions being imposed against the Turkish community in Cyprus, which in some instances have been so severe as to amount to a veritable siege ..." (S/5950, para. 222, dated 10 September 1964).

The Turkish intervention that followed the Greek coup in 1974 had been made inevitable by the naked aggression by Greece and the threat posed to the Turkish Cypriots by the joint Greek and Greek Cypriot forces, which were poised to overrun the Turkish Cypriot areas and carry out their extermination plans. The "Greek invasion of Cyprus", as it was described by the Greek Cypriot side's own leader, Archbishop Makarios, in his speech before the Security Council on 19 July 1974, was thwarted by the timely intervention of Turkey, which was in accordance with the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee. Thus, Turkey's intervention brought an end to the systematic human rights violations by the Greek Cypriots and saved the Turkish Cypriots from total annihilation. It was not an "invasion" but a peace operation that stopped the bloodshed, saved the binational independence of Cyprus and even served as a catalyst in bringing democracy to Greece by causing the downfall of the Greek junta.

The historic events described above are a testimony to the fact that the responsibility for the murder of hundreds of defenceless Turkish Cypriots, and

the destruction of the bicommunal partnership State by force of arms, leading to the ultimate division of Cyprus, rests solely with the Greek Cypriot side and Greece.

As for Turkey's military presence, which has been exploited for propaganda purposes in the said statement, it should be pointed out that this is a vital security requirement for the Turkish Cypriot people, particularly in the absence of a political settlement guaranteeing such security. Given the massive arms build-up in South Cyprus and our bitter experiences with the Greek Cypriots during the turbulent period between 1963 and 1974, the continuation of Turkey's protective presence becomes all the more indispensable for Turkish Cypriot security and the peace and stability of the region.

The Greek Cypriot allegations on displaced persons are also a distortion of the facts and are misleading. This question has been fundamentally settled through the agreement on the exchange of populations reached between the two sides at the third round of the intercommunal talks held in Vienna between 31 July and 2 August 1975, whereby the two sides agreed on a voluntary regrouping of populations, each in its own respective territory, the Turkish Cypriots in the North and the Greek Cypriots in the South (see S/11789, dated 5 August 1975). The implementation of this agreement, which paved the way for a bizonal, bicommunal federal settlement of the Cyprus question, was carried out with the help of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) (see S/11789/Add.1, dated 10 September 1975). Any other issue pertaining to this matter is a subject for discussion at the intercommunal talks, conducted under United Nations auspices, and should not be exploited for propaganda purposes.

Contrary to what was claimed by the Greek Cypriot delegate at the above meeting, there has been no "forcible expulsion" of the Greek Cypriots from the North. All Greek Cypriots applying for permanent transfer to the South are interviewed in private by UNFICYP in order to verify that the transfers are voluntary, as will be seen from the United Nations report quoted below:

> "UNFICYP continued to interview Greek Cypriots who applied for 'permanent transfer' to the southern part of the island in order to verify that the transfer was voluntary. Two such transfers took place during the reporting period and three Turkish Cypriots transferred permanently from south to north. UNFICYP also facilitated 486 visits by Greek Cypriots from the Karpas peninsula to the southern part of the island." (S/1994/680, para. 36)

As for medical care available to the Greek Cypriots living in the North, there are adequate health centres of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Ministry of Health serving the local populace (Turkish Cypriots, Greek Cypriots and Maronites) in the Karpaz and Girne areas. Local health centres in the Karpaz peninsula are situated in the villages of Dipkarpaz and Yeni Erenköy. In cases where the said medical centres may fall short of providing the necessary medical treatment, patients are transferred to the Gazi Magosa State Hospital for treatment and, where the Greek Cypriots in particular are concerned, they can be sent, upon request, to the South. This is confirmed by the following quotation from a relevant United Nations report:

"Medical care available to Greek Cypriots in the North is as good as that provided for the Turkish Cypriots in the same area. Greek Cypriots may obtain permission for temporary visits to the South in order to obtain medical treatment." (S/12723, dated 31 May 1978, para. 28)

As indicated in the following quotation from the same United Nations report regarding educational facilities, Greek Cypriot elementary schools in Karpaz provide schooling for Greek Cypriot schoolchildren, who study textbooks sent by the Greek Cypriot side.

"Two Greek Cypriot primary schools are operating in the North. Both are in the Karpas area: one in Ayia Tries and the other in Rizokarpaso." (S/12723, para. 29)

Furthermore, the Greek Cypriots in Karpaz have access to religious services without hindrance and carry on with their lives in peace under the protection of the laws of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The following extract is a relevant example:

"No restrictions on freedom of worship in the North have been reported for the period under review." (S/13369, dated 31 May 1979, para. 34)

Concerning the so-called "enclaved" Greek Cypriots, it is noteworthy that the term "enclaved" was first used in Cyprus to describe the plight of the Turkish Cypriots during the period between 1963 and 1974. Lately, the Greek Cypriot propaganda machine has been trying to usurp even this term with a view to exploiting the presence of several hundred Greek Cypriots living in Northern Cyprus. The fact is that there have been no "enclaved" people in Cyprus since the liberation of the enclaved Turkish Cypriots by Turkey in 1974.

The Greek Cypriot charges regarding telephones and mail for the Greek Cypriots living in the North are also unfounded. It is true that, owing to the relatively less developed infrastructure of the area, there are certain problems in installing telephones in homes in Karpaz, but this applies equally to the Turkish Cypriot residents of the region. However, telephone lines are currently being installed in the area in order to provide the residents with this facility, irrespective of ethnic origin.

It is noteworthy that, despite the hardships created by the Greek Cypriot administration's all-out inhuman embargo on the North, which adversely affects all the people in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, the Turkish Cypriot side has initiated certain unilateral measures for the further improvement of the living conditions of Greek Cypriots living in Northern Cyprus, as part of President Denktaş's 14-point confidence-building proposals of 20 January 1995.

These measures were subsequently put into effect, including improvements in the frequency and duration of the visits to the South of the Greek Cypriots living in the North; improvements relating to the visit to the North of those Greek Cypriots living in the South who have parents or relatives in the North; freedom of movement within Northern Cyprus of the Greek Cypriots living here; and improvement of the entry and exit procedures of the Greek Cypriots living in the North via Ercan State Airport in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

It must also be stated, in connection with the barrage of Greek Cypriot allegations, that it is the Greek Cypriot side which, together with Greece, has always attempted to alter the demographic character of Cyprus, not only by introducing thousands of soldiers and settlers from Greece for decades, but also by trying to "cleanse" Cyprus of its ethnic Turkish population. At present, the Greek Cypriot administration continues to admit tens of thousands of immigrants and others from foreign countries, and, as a result of its irresponsible policies, South Cyprus has become, as widely reported in the international press, a centre for money-laundering, drug and arms smuggling and other illicit activity.

I would also like to point out that the Greek Cypriots chauvinistically claim monopoly over cultural property in the island, while ignoring its centuries-old rich Turkish-Islamic cultural heritage. It is not forgotten that the Greek Cypriots tried to destroy and totally eradicate all traces of that culture during the tragic years between 1963 and 1974, and thereafter, in their campaign to "Hellenize" the island. The following paragraph from the authoritative Council of Europe report, dated 2 July 1989 (AS/CULT/AA (41) 1), is clear evidence of which side is responsible for the destruction of cultural property in Cyprus:

> "5.3 We noted with regret the complete destruction of the main mosque in Paphos. The whole area has since been flattened to give way for a widened road junction and a car park. There is no memorial to the existence of the mosque. Below the road a Turkish bath complex remains hidden in rubble and vegetation awaiting restoration. The Turkish Cypriot cemetery by the nearby St. Sophia Mouttalos mosque is dilapidated".

Recently, Greek Cypriot wrath has again been unleashed on the historic Bayraktar Mosque in the Greek Sector of Nicosia, which has been the target of several bombing and arson attacks since 1974.

As for the veracity of the charges regarding the condition of cultural property in the North, the above-mentioned Council of Europe report, in its paragraph 5.3, from which the following extract is taken, suffices to destroy the credibility of the other side's claims in this respect:

> "We saw no churches destroyed though St. George in Limnia (in the North) was listed as such and no minarets recently built (at Engomi the tower remains unaltered with its bell ..."

It will be observed from the foregoing that the Greek Cypriots are in no position to complain about human rights issues in Cyprus, be it displaced persons or cultural property. It was the Greek Cypriot administration that violated the most basic rights of the Turkish Cypriots and the principles of the rule of law, and continues to do so even today. Although the Turkish Cypriots now live free from Greek Cypriot harassment, oppression and terror, an inhuman embargo on their political, economic, social and cultural activity, imposed by the other side, continues. This is coupled with a world-wide campaign of defamation and propaganda, hampering the search for a negotiated solution to the Cyprus issue, through your mission of good offices.

I should be grateful if this letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 103 and 104, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Osman ERTUĞ
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus